

12 Presentation Rules

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- 1.** Be totally clear and focused about the key „take-home-message“ you want to bring across. Great presenters build their presentations around one or few key messages. Please consider: the quality of your presentation can be measured by the things, people could easily remember even days after your presentation.
- 2.** Stick to your topic. Doing a presentation is about answering a clearly defined and well communicated question or problem. Any content, which is not relevant to the key topic is a waste of time.
- 3.** Tell a story. Things stay abstract as long as you are abstract. As soon as you put a human face into what you want to tell, people will be ready and better able to understand and memorize. So, use examples, which have personal meanings whenever you can.
- 4.** Avoid trivialities. You should know your audience and have a sense on which existing knowledge you can build. By presenting points, which most of the audience already know, you understate the people you talk to. It'll make them feel worse.
- 5.** Don't overestimate what the audience already knows. In some fields you must lay the ground for the audience so that they can follow. You should neither bore nor over-challenge the people you talk to.
- 6.** You must strongly believe in what you say. Otherwise you would make an idiot out of yourself. Presenting points in which you don't believe makes you weak in any moment during your presentation.
- 7.** Be as you are. Do not try to be humorous, cool, bold or whatever if it does not fit to your personality or level of expertise. Generally, do not try to draw a picture about yourself, which is not You. Otherwise you would act like a clown, which in most settings would not be appropriate.

- 8.** Your slides must look good. The quality of your material can be totally managed in advance to the presentation. If they are bad you tell the audience that you didn't take enough time for preparation.
- 9.** Don't pack your slides. Slides containing too much information will confuse your audience. The people you talk to will struggle in either reading the slides or listen to what you have to say.
- 10.** Do not explain slides. The presentation is not about the slides you use. It is about you and your personal message. The slides are there to support you and your points, not vice versa. Remember: the best speeches in history have been performed without any slides (e.g. „I have a dream“).
- 11.** Do not read from your notes or slides. It is not natural and lets your audience believe you would not know what you are talking about. If presenting would be equal to reading, the audience would be better off by reading your text for themselves.
- 12.** You must stay in time. Every minute you take longer than scheduled steals other presenters' time, which is not fair. Moreover, needing more time than planned makes the audience feel that you are not able to control your presentation.